# Novel Sounds

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## 1. A tension between ordinary and theoretical views

One of the central questions of the ontology of art is to which ontological categories the different types of artworks – such as paintings, novels, pieces of musics, or etchings – belong to. The best answer to this question may then reveal whether all types of artworks belong to the same ontological category; and perhaps also how this fact may be related to their significance in our lives.

What I want to do in this paper is to begin to develop and render plausible – though not to fully assess or defend – a certain answer to this question, which involves the postulation of a somewhat new ontological category.[1] I will be concerned solely with the ontology of novels. But I hope that much of what I will say will apply to other so-called repeatable forms of art, such as photographs, prints, other literary works, or pieces of music. Moreover, an important part of developing and rendering plausible the ontological view in question will be taken by the introduction and motivation of a fairly new outlook on the nature of sounds.

As will become clear, this detour is partly motivated by the fact that answering the mentioned central question in the ontology of art has turned out to be no easy task. And one particularly important reason for this has been that there seems to be – as often enough in philosophical discussions – a not immediately resolvable tension between our ordinary opinions and practices regarding the world, on the one hand, and our more theoretical understanding of the world, on the other.

In the case of the ontology of the various types of artworks, the ordinary understanding in question is concerned with our commonly accepted and fairly pre-theoretical beliefs about the nature of these artworks, as well as with our typical treatment of and interaction with them; while the more theoretical understanding at issue deals with the more or less fundamental ontological categories, which the various more specific kinds of entity – such as artworks – are supposed to fall under.[2]

1 The view which I will put forward has its precedents in the work of Kaplan (1990), Alward (2004), Nudds (2007) and, to some extent, Levinson (1990), but has so farl failed to be widely discussed or even endorsed. Rohrbaugh (2003) seems to defend a very similar view, and in a similar way, but unfortunately I came across his article too late to be able to properly take it into account here. Besides, it will very quickly become clear that I have considerably changed my mind about the nature of novels since writing the initial abstract for this article.

2 The distinction at issue is perhaps not that easy to be made, given that our ordinary views may already count as theories of some kind, while our ontological views may include or be heavily

More specifically, it is part of our ordinary understanding of artworks of particular types that they possess certain essential features. And this leads inevitably to a tension with the more theoretical view if none of the ontological categories deemed to be well-established allows for the simultaneous instantiation of all these features. That this tension indeed arises has been often noted (cf., e.g., Levinson (1990) and Thomasson (2004)); and I will come back to this issue in a moment. But before that, it will be helpful to consider first the consequences of this tension.

The most immediate inclination might perhaps be to conclude that artworks do not fit our ontological picture of the world. The idea is that, since they possess essential features, which are incompatible with belonging to any of the basic categories of entities, they should not be counted among the furniture of the world. But this conclusion is certainly unacceptable, and any inclination in its favour should be resisted. For artworks – as many other ordinary objects – play an immensely important role in our lives. And any ontological theory failing to accommodate them should prima facie be given up just for this reason. Ontological enquiry might eventually end up suggesting that none of the best, or sufficiently good, available ontological theories can capture artworks in a satisfactory way. And this might then lead to scepticism either about the status of artworks as genuine or real entities, or, more generally, about the ontological project of finding out about the ontological categories making up the world. But the very strong suspicion would remain that something went wrong somewhere, and that a better approach to the ontology of artworks, as well as all other entities, is still there to be discovered. As often, scepticism constitutes only a last resort.

Moreover, it seems that ontology remains rather void and unilluminating unless it is substantiated by explanatory links to entities which we commonly take to be part of the world, and which are of significance to our lives. For instance, there does not seem to be much point in being able to specify that properties are tropes, or that persons involve substances, if these insights would not help us to better understand, say, how properties can be possessed by objects, or be response-dependent, or why persons can act, be loved, or have conscious experiences. Otherwise, if there are no criteria external to ontology for choosing between alternative ontological views, there is always the danger that ontology remains trapped in its own domain and ends up being not much more than a logical game. In this sense, it is important that ontology should try to accommodate those entities – such as artworks – which we ordinarily take to exist and to be of significance. It should therefore be tried to resolve the mentioned tension.

Very generally, there are two independent, but possibly compatible ways in which this may happen. The more common approach has been to reject – or at least substantially modify – part of our ordinary understanding of artworks. Accordingly, it may be maintained that certain

informed by our common beliefs about what exists. But I hope that the contrast drawn is none the less clear, and clear-cut, enough to ignore these issues.

of the features of artworks in question are not really essential to them; and that, correspondingly, our ordinary view and practice regarding artworks, or our philosophical understanding of this view and practice, are partly mistaken and in need of revision. But it may also be argued that it is instead (or in addition) our theoretical stance on ontological categories that has to be changed (cf. Thomasson (1999) and (2004)). In this case, the complaint will very likely be that we have so far not recognized all existing categories of entities and are in need to postulate one or more further categories, namely those required to theoretically capture the types of artworks under discussion, as they are described by our ordinary view on them.[3]

It should be clear that any revision of our basic ontological classifications is not a light matter and therefore needs strong motivation. The question of which fundamental categories of entities there are concerns the very core of the nature of our world and has important consequences on how we do or should conceive of the various more specific types of entities populating this world. So a substantial change in our answer to this question needs to be very well supported. But there are good reasons to think, it seems, that a tension with our ordinary view of artworks provides us with a strong motive to reconsider and possibly alter our respective ontological views.

That artworks have to be ontologically accommodated as part of our world has already been mentioned. But it seems similarly undeniable that the primary criterion for the adequacy of an ontological account of artworks is to which extent it captures our ordinary opinions and practices concerning art. First of all, artworks are human-made objects or artefacts, and they would not exist (at least not in their current forms) if there would not be any humans. But, more importantly, whether some object counts as an instance of art is not (or at least not clearly, and not always) a matter of some kind of specific function, such as to elicit pleasant experiences or educate the people (cf. Wollheim (1980), Davies (1991), and Wiggins (2001)). Instead, what seems often, if not always, to be crucial is how the object in question is ordinarily experienced and treated by us and, more specifically, by artists, curators, critics, and so on. In particular, we may treat objects as artworks for very different reasons, which are too particular to allow proper systematisation – as both the failure of the various projects to define art and the realistic possibility of future art of a very different sort suggest. The underlying reason of this is perhaps that the aesthetic experiences and benefits differ from (type of) artwork to (type of) artwork. Medieval altarpieces are art for different reasons than

3 Such new categories need not be more than modifications or sub-categories of already accepted categories. But for reasons of simplicity, I will treat them simply as new categories.

Note also that the revision of both our ordinary and our theoretical views can perhaps take two forms: we may change the ways in which we ordinarily or theoretically understand the entities concerned; or we may change the ways in which we philosophically capture these ordinary or theoretical views. For instance, we may be wrong about the common-sense idea that artworks are created in two ways: we may err because artworks are not created, after all; or we may err in our previous description of what it means, according to common-sense, for an artwork to be created. But again, these further divisions will be irrelevant for what follows, and I will therefore ignore them.

conceptual artworks perhaps partly because of considerable differences in our aesthetic experiences of and interactions with them. Perhaps what ultimately counts is whether artworks possess some, or a certain kind of, aesthetic value (though one problem here is that there seems to be bad, that is, aesthetically defective or worthless art). But even then, our experience and treatment of them – or at least the experience and treatment of sufficiently competent people, or of later and distanced generations (cf. Hume's famous essay on the standards of taste, as well as the very end of Wollheim (1987)) – will presumably reflect this special value and, hence, their status as artworks. But if which objects are, or are not, artworks is determined or reflected by how we normally see them, both in opinion and in practice, the latter presumably also determines or reflects the particular features which characterise the artworks – namely both the features because of which they count as art, and the features which characterise their more specific ways of being art. Indeed, it seems difficult to imagine a plausible situation in which our ordinary view is typically right about which objects are art, but also usually wrong about their nature and about what it means for them to be art.

This still leaves open the possibility that not all aspects of our ordinary understanding of art is relevant or appropriate and therefore should be preserved, no matter what. But the considerations just presented provide us with a good motive to hold on to this understanding as much as possible and treat it at least as equal in this respect as our theoretical view on the basic ontological categories of the entities in the world. So both ways of resolving any potential tension between our ordinary and our theoretical views regarding the ontology of artworks enjoy considerable initial plausibility; and which of them to choose will not be an easy matter to be decided.

But, in any case, what could possibly decide this issue? There will clearly be certain core aspects of our ordinary view on artworks which should be taken as unrevisable – such as the idea that there are artworks, or that they are, in some sense at least, created or made by artists. Is there any similar limit on our ontological theory and, notably, on which fundamental categories it accepts (apart from more formal criteria, such as consistency and intelligibility)? Ockham's principle may very well be relevant in our choice of ontology: we should perhaps indeed try to assume as few categories as possible. But this restriction is not absolute. It may help us to choose between several theories, which postulate different numbers of ontological categories, but are otherwise equivalent (e.g., with respect to their accommodation of our ordinary views on the matter). But it cannot as such speak for or against a theory, evaluated on its own. And, as a consequence, it may be outweighed by other considerations, such as whether the core – or perhaps even the peripheral – aspects of our ordinary views and practices are adequately accommodated.[4] So the dialectical situation seems to be as follows: if

4 Another problem is that it is not clear whether Ockham's desideratum is really best satisfied solely by keeping the number of different categories as low as possible, or also, or instead, say, by keeping the nature of those categories as simple or intelligible as possible. And it may be part of keeping one's

the tension involves core aspects of our ordinary understanding of artworks, it is our ontology which needs to be revised; otherwise, we have to weigh the various conflicting parts of our two views on the world and, on the basis of this, decide which to give up.

Whether much can be gained by this strategy will primarily depend on whether we can become sufficiently clear on which aspects of our ordinary understanding of artworks should be taken to be unrevisable. This need not require, however, that we have to be able to tell apart all core aspects of our understanding from all peripheral ones. For as long as we are able to identify some specific features of certain types of artworks, which we cannot seriously take to be non-essential to them, even though we cannot further explain why this should be so, we may have already enough to rule out certain views on the ontological categorisation of those artworks, and to opt for alternative – and possibly less sparse – ones instead. And as the examples mentioned above suggest already, it seems indeed possible to identify some of the core features of artworks. None the less, whether an aspect of our ordinary view on artworks is central in that a satisfactory ontology of artworks cannot fail to capture them may very well be a matter of degree. And, more importantly perhaps, which respective features of artworks are involved here (and therefore really essential to them) may very well differ among the various forms of art, and perhaps even among examples of the same form of art.

It might be thought that a much more straightforward line of reasoning speaks for resolving the tension in favour of our ordinary understanding of artworks. For it might be maintained, in the spirit of Quine's writings, that, very roughly, whether certain kinds and categories of entities exist is solely a matter of which such kinds and categories our best theories quantify over and thereby assume to exist. And in the light of the immense importance of our ordinary views on art for the occurrence and nature of artworks, it appears plausible to suggest that these views come very close to the best account which we can provide of artworks (at least, there do not seem to be any serious, more theoretical alternatives). However, not only is this approach to ontology generally controversial (cf., e.g., Lowe (1998) for a more substantial account of existence). But it seems more specifically problematic with respect to artworks precisely because they are so much dependent on our intentionality and activity (cf. Thomasson (2004)). It may be the case that we should rely on the results of the natural sciences in deciding which entities there are, and perhaps also to which ontological categories they belong. But the same approach seems far less plausible if entities are concerned the existence and nature of which is determined or reflected primarily by what we ordinarily believe or do. This way of understanding the world – perhaps in contrast to the scientific way of understanding it – does not obviously appear to be of the right kind as to warrant by itself taking its postulations of entities ontologically at face value. It seems that more needs to be said to justify the claim that our common beliefs about artworks correspond to the fundamental ontological structure of the world, even if assuming that some of our scientific

ontology simple and intelligible that its explanation of the nature of artworks, as we ordinarily conceive of it, is simple and intelligible.

beliefs do.

However, there would indeed be some support for the postulation of new ontological categories in response to our ordinary views on art, if there are other types of entities the (most) adequate account of which strongly suggest the introduction of the same categories. And, as I will argue below, this is just what happens if we consider the ontology of sounds and compare it with that of novels.

Here is how I will proceed. First of all, I will try to specify five features ordinarily ascribed to novels and motivate the idea that they are essential to them, so that any satisfactory ontological account of novels should be able to accommodate them. Then, I will discuss and reject the identification of novels either with (sums or sets of) concrete entities, or with types or kinds. After that, I will briefly assess two recently proposed modifications of the latter view by Levinson and Thomasson. My conclusion will be that especially Thomasson's account contains promising aspects which, however, are in need of more development. To spell out the emerging view in more detail, I will switch my attention to the case of sounds and try to motivate and formulate an ontology which understands them as prototypes, that is, a special sort of temporal universals. In the final section, I will return to novels and apply to them my conclusions about sounds

## 2. Some essential features of novels

Above, I have already mentioned some core aspects of our ordinary understanding of novels as artworks: namely that there indeed are novels, and that they are created or written by some of us. In what follows, I want to identify five further aspects of our view on novels, which I take to be central to our understanding in the sense that giving them up in response to more theoretical worries should count as giving up on the idea of novels as such. I hope that the accompanying considerations will make it sufficiently plausible that this is really how it is.

Novels are the creations of writers. Part of what this means is that novels are *temporal:* they do not exist forever, but come into existence at certain moments in time and may afterwards again cease to exist. The novel *Ulysses*, for instance, did not exist before Joyce sat down to write it. And although it still exists, there are presumably many other novels (or other literary works) which have not survived until today. The coming into existence of novels is (presumably) a temporally extended process. And it is surely often difficult, and perhaps sometimes even impossible, to specify a particular point in time precisely at which novels acquire existence. But none the less, there are certain moments in time after which they clearly are in existence (e.g., after their first publication). Mirroring the process of creation is the process of destruction. Novels may, and often enough do, go out of existence. This

happens especially if all their written or printed copies and all printing plates or other means of reproduction are destroyed, and all memories concerning their concrete content or order of words are erased.[5] Again, the process of going out of existence may be temporally extended – for instance when the copies of a novel are destroyed one after the other, instead of all at the same time. And as before, it may not be easy to determine when exactly a certain novel has ceased to exist. But for any completely lost novel, there are specific moments in time after which it is clearly not in existence any more.

Novels are also *multiply realisable* (or repeatable). What this notion is intended to capture is the often noted capacity of kinds, types, universals, numbers, and so on, to be – in some sense – 'wholly present' in several distinct examples, instances, tokens, and so on. In particular, multiple realisability is meant to differ from spatial scatteredness, that is, the property of having several spatial and possibly disconnected parts at different locations. Here is not the place to give the notion of multiple realisability its full meaning, so it suffices perhaps to say that being multiply realisable means, roughly, being able to fully occur simultaneously at different places and by means, or in the form, of distinct realising entities. In the case of novels, the realising entities in the case of novels may be either physical or mental copies of the novel – such as manuscripts, printed copies, sequences of spoken words, or memories (as in Truffaut's *Fahrenheit 451*). Often, the relation of realisation takes on the form of instantiation or exemplification – as in the case of properties or kinds. But this need not always be so, as perhaps the example of types and possibly also of novels and other repeatable artworks show. Besides, multiply realisable entities do not seem to possess spatial locations, or at least not in the same sense as normal material entities. The novel *Ulysses* is not located where it has been written; nor is it located at the scattered sum of all the places at which there currently are copies or means of reproduction. At best, the novel might be said to be multiply spatially located: that is, to be wholly located at different locations in space, namely at each of the locations of its copies or means of reproduction. This way of talking might make sense partly because each of these concrete entities suffice for the existence of the novel and render it fully accessible or reproducible. But even then, novels would not be spatially located in the same way as concrete entities. Novels cannot be 'in the drawer' in the same manner in which manuscripts of novels may be.

The multiple realisability of novels has direct consequences for their *persistence conditions*. First of all, the existence of a single copy – and, in fact, of any copy, and not of any special or privileged one (such as the original manuscript) – is sufficient for the existence of a novel. This means also that the existence of no particular copy – again not even of any special or privileged one – is necessary for the existence of a given novel. As long as there is one or the other copy – even if it is only a mental one –, the novel exists. And the novel may survive the destruction of any particular copies. Indeed, it seems plausible to say that it can survive the

5 It is debatable whether memorising a novel in its entirety constitutes the creation of a mental copy of the novel, or rather only the creation of means for recreating such copies.

disappearance of all copies. For if, for example, the printing plates still remain in existence, it would seem odd to say that the novel does not exist any more, or has been lost. In particular, if a new copy is printed with the use of the plates, it is not as if the novel has been recreated or rewritten. Instead, simply a new copy has been reproduced. Accordingly, the existence of relevant reproduction means is already sufficient for the existence of novels.

In addition, novels are *individuals* in the sense that they enjoy continuous existence and possess (fairly) determinate individuation criteria. Two authors who, independently of each other, come up with exactly the same sequences of words will (if at all) end up writing two numerically distinct novels, even though they need not be any qualitative differences among the two novels or any of their copies. Some writer in Australia might have happened to write a book just like *Ulysses*, but without knowing anything about Joyce and his work. And the resulting novel would not have been the same as the one written by Joyce.[6] In particular, we would have assessed its aesthetic merit in a different way than the aesthetic value of Joyce's book. In contrast, to the extent to which someone reproduces the work of another (e.g., by copying or translating it), the result will count as (part of) the same novel, though possibly in a different guise. Of course, we value the work of copyists and translators of novels, but we typically do not credit them with having written a new literary work.[7] So what seems to be relevant for the particular identity of novels is the nature of the act of writing in which they originate. Their qualitative features, on the other hand, seem far less important. As the possibility of two independently written works illustrates, distinct novels (or copies thereof) may resemble each other perfectly with respect to their linguistic content; while the many copies of one and the same novel may differ considerably, due to printing mistakes, omissions, censure, deliberate alterations by the author or editor, choice of printing material and style, and so on. For instance, *Ulysses* has occurred in many different versions, its various copies have involved different kinds of paper, spelling and layout, as well as different errors or cuts, and some of them have covered only part of the novel. It might not be easy to fully specify the individuation criteria for novels. But it seems difficult to deny that they possess some.

Novels are, finally, *accessible:* they can be read, listened to, understood, and enjoyed. And our access to them is mediated by our access to particular copies of them. Without the perception – and, hence, the presence – of a copy, we cannot access a novel. It is less clear, however, whether this renders novels themselves perceivable (and causally efficacious). Perhaps we instead grasp them more like we grasp meanings. None the less, it appears that novels are, at least in principle, publicly accessible. Just as there are presumably no private meanings, there are no private novels (while, of course, a novel may exist only within the mind of the writer).

6 Borges' case of Menard rewriting *Don Quixote* is perhaps different. Since Maynard knew Cervantes' novel and actually set out to recreate it, it is not clear whether he thereby rewrote the same novel as Cervantes, or a new one.

7 That this may very well be different in the case of poetry provides further support for the idea that poetry is, to some extent, untranslatable.

## 3. Novels as (sets or sums of) concrete entities

Taking these essential features of novels serious requires rejecting their identification with concrete entities, or sets or sums thereof.[8] That is, our ordinary understanding of novels does not fit with taking them to fall under the ontological category of concrete entities. These entities – such as tables or, indeed, copies of novels – are characterised by the fact that they possess temporality and spatiality, but lack multiple realisability, as described above.[9] If at all, they are realised, and realisable, by only a single concrete entity, namely themselves. This already suffices to resist the identification of particular novels with particular concrete entities. As indicated above, the persistence of conditions of the two types of entity are just too different, and this is the result of the difference in realisability. It does not help much to identify novels with the set or sum of certain or all their copies – whether these involve only current or also past and future copies. One motivation for this view might be that it promises to capture the multiple realisability, at least if the set or sum of all (current) copies is selected. But again, it does not fit the persistence conditions of novels. First of all, all plausible candidates for the sets or sums to be identified with novels will presumably include as their essential members or parts some current copies and will therefore cease to exist, once one of these copies is destroyed; but novels may survive such a destruction of a single copy. And, furthermore, if the sets or sums comprise in fact all past, present and future copies, they will not even come into existence until the last copy is created (and all the others still remain in existence); while novels clearly do not count as incomplete or even non-existent unless this condition is met.[10] In short, the multiple realisability of novels has the consequence that no particular (set or sum of) copies are specially privileged in relation to the existence of the novels. New copies may always come into being, while old copies may always go out of existence. And both facts ensure that, typically, the existence or non-existence of no specific copy has any special bearing on the persistence of novels.

## 4. Novels as types or kinds

In the light of these problems, many philosophers have instead tried to identify novels with universals, such as types or kinds (cf. Wollheim (1980), Wolterstorff (1980), Currie 1988), and

8 Further below, I will consider whether novels might be identified with types or kinds. I assume thereby that sets or sums differ from types or kinds in that the former are constituted by their members or parts, while the latter are realised by them. One consequence of this is that, since types and kinds are mulitiply realisable, none of the realising entities is required for them to exist – at least not unless it is the last existing one. By contrast, sets and sums go out of existence as soon as one of their members or parts cease to exist. Besides, classes are presumably more like types and kind, than like sums and sets, and should receive the appropriate treatment.

9 They are also characterised by the fact that their existence does not depend on the simultaneous (though perhaps the prior) existence of other concrete entities. In this respect, concrete entities differ from tropes and other dependant entities, which I will discuss below.

10 A further problem for the identification either with concrete copies or with sets or sums thereof is that novels seem to be able to exist even if no physical or mental copy exists – for instance, if only the printing plates or files are left.

Kivy (1993)).[11] For universals differ from concrete entities precisely in that they are multiple realisable. However, traditionally, they also have been taken to be non-temporal. As a consequence, if novels really were types or kinds, they could not count as created. Here again, we have the tension between some of our ordinary views on art and the attempt to rely on traditional ontological categories to capture art. The resulting problme has sometimes been countered with the idea that novels – perhaps just like other repeatable works of art – are discovered rather than created. But even if this rather and seemingly desperate move can be legitimated[12], there is the further and potentially deeper problem that novels have more fine-grained individuation conditions than types or kinds. Again, if two independently working authors write exactly the same sequence of sentences, their novels should still count as numerically distinct. But if the non-temporal types or kinds in question are not defined in terms of sequences of words, it is unclear in terms of which aspects of novels they might be specified instead.[13]

It might be attempted to solve at least the first problem by taking the respective types or kinds to be temporal – say, by characterising them in relation to the property of being created at a certain moment of time and by a certain method. This view may thereby be modelled on the temporal understanding of properties, which treats them as existing only if they are actually instantiated (cf. the notion of Aristotelian universals), or only if there is something which either possesses or lacks them (cf. Wolterstorff (1980)). Applied to types or kinds, the thought might then be that they exist as well only if they are actually realised by some example or instance. Then, they could still count as created: they come into being once their first example comes into being, and if the latter is an artefact produced by us, they will thereby created. But it is not clear how this could help to solve the second problem. The challenge is now to specify the sense in which the two qualitatively (or at least linguistically) identical, but numerically distinct novels constitute distinct types or kinds. They both might be created at the same time and by using the same means, so their origins will at best differ in relation to the author involved and the spatial location of his or her activity of writing. So, in contrast to Aristotelian universals, their identity would depend partly on certain aspects of the origin of their first realiser.

11 I will ignore attempts to identify artworks with mental or imaginary entities (cf. Collingwood's and Sartre's views) The postulation of non-concrete entities, such as universals, has often come under attack. If it really turns out that there are no such entities, or that they can be reduced to concrete entities, and that talk about non-concrete entities has to be spelled out in terms of talk about concrete entities, I hope that the following considerations may be easily translated. The idea is that, even if talk about ('normal') concrete entities and talk about non-concrete entities refer ultimately to entities of one and the same ontological category, there is an important distinction between these two ways of talking and the respective two kinds of entities. However, in this case, the central question raised above would have to be slightly reformulated, as concerning very basic kinds of the single ontological category accepted, rather than as concerning several ontological categories.

12 See, for instance, Levinson (1990) for its many problems.

13 It might be suggested that the respective types or kinds are to be characterised in relation to the property of being created at a certain moment of time and by a certain method. But this would presumably render the types or kinds temporal – an option which I will discuss

But this would be in tension with at least one natural understanding of types or kinds, according to which their identity is a matter of the nature of those properties which something has to possess in order to count as an example of the type or kind in question (cf. Wolterstorff (1980)). The type or kind 'horse' differs from the type or kind 'dog' precisely because they correspond to different properties – being a horse and being a dog, respectively – which are characteristic of their examples or instances. But the same could not be true of those types or kinds identical with novels. The property which is supposed to individuate them – namely the property of being created by this author at that time – is not shared by most of their copies, and need not be shared by any of their still existing copies. Indeed, it becomes mysterious in virtue of which features entities would count as copies of a novel, and of this novel rather than that, given that most copies are not produced by the author, and not at the original time of creation. So, if there is no better way of understanding why novels and horses should be both classified as types or kinds, it seems that this classification should be dropped with respect to novels: if they are indeed universals, they are not types or kinds. Besides, the persistence conditions of novels would still differ from the persistence conditions of the proposed temporal types or kinds. For while a novel may remain in existence even if all of its copies are destroyed (e.g., if there still are the relevant printing plates), the temporal types or kinds would presumably cease to exist, once all their examples have disappeared. And the suggestion that all means of reproduction should, too, count as examples of the novels remains again mysterious unless it is clarified what turns them into copies of novels.

The problems for the views which take novels to be types or kinds can also not be avoided by maintaining that our ordinary talk about novels to be ambiguous between talk about the types or kinds involved and talk about their examples or instances. Surely, our talk about novels is often imprecise or elliptical, as when we speak of 'buying, owning or borrowing *Ulysses*', or when saying 'this is Joyce's novel' while pointing to a copy of *Ulysses*. And these examples may indeed be taken to illustrate the kind of ambiguity proposed: in the first, we mean to talk about a particular copy of the novel, but seem to talk about the novel itself; while in the second, we mean to talk about the novel, but seem to talk about a particular copy of it. So, the idea might be, 'novels' are temporal in so far as they are copies and hence concrete entities, while they are multiply realisable in so far as they are (non-temporal) types or kinds – for instance, those identified in terms of sequences of words. But there would still be the problem of how to distinguish qualitatively identical novels which have been independently written by different authors. Talk about this difference seems to involve talk about novels which cannot be interpreted either as talk about concrete entities or as talk about types or kinds, for the same reasons as considered above. And moreover, treating only the concrete copies of novels as temporal, while treating only the related, but distinct types or kinds as multiply realisable, would still amount to a substantial revision of our ordinary understanding of novels.

## 5. Levinson's view: novels as 'indicated types'

Levinson has mainly worked on the ontology of music (cf. Levinson (1990)), but the general line of his proposal can be easily transferred to a theory of novels. According to his view, novels will be 'indicated types'. These are created entities which are constituted by three elements: a non-temporal type, the creating subject, and the respective time of creation. In the case of novels, the three elements are the ordered sequence of words (or some structure very like it), the author, and the time of his or her writing the novel. Novels, understood as such 'indicated types', therefore come into existence only once an act of writing has occurred. By contrast, the relevant types of ordered sequences of words exist prior to the novels – in fact, they exist eternally. Thus, Levinson has no problem to account for some aspects of the temporality and persistence of novels. And he can also explain why different acts of writing lead to different novels, even if they result in novels with exactly the same order of words.

But, as often been noted (cf., e.g., Currie (1988), Kivy (1993), and Alward (2004)), his account faces some serious problems. One of them is that it is not clear whether 'indicated types' should really count as entities in their own right – and created ones, for that matter. According to Levinson, they are created either by producing an example of them, or by generating instructions or means of producing such examples. But we often produce concrete entities which realise or instantiate some universal, without this resulting in the production of a new entity, over and above the already existing universal, creator and event of creation. In particular, in writing *Ulysses*, Joyce produced objects which exemplified shapes and colours (e.g., the signs on paper), but we are not inclined to say that he thereby created new entities, namely 'indicated' (i.e., time- and person-indexed) 'shapes' or 'colours', which differ from normal shape and colour properties. So Levinson's account seems to be much closer to a view which takes our talk about novels to be really talk about two other entities – events of creation and ordered sequences of words – and their relation to each other. And furthermore, it is difficult to see how 'indicated types' go out of existence. The passing of the event of creation, or the death of author, clearly do not cause the respective 'indicated type' to cease to exist as well. But since the existence of no other entities is important for the existence of 'indicated types', they seem unable to go out of existence, once created. Novels, however, clearly can disappear again. So we should not identify novels with 'indicated types', or even treat the latter as genuine entities over and above mere mereological sums.

## 6. Thomasson's view: novels as 'abstract artifacts'

Thomasson, by contrast, tries to capture repeatable forms of art, such as novels, by introducing the ontological category of 'abstract artifacts' (cf. Thomasson (1999) and (2004)). More generally, examples of 'abstract artifacts' are cultural or social entities (e.g., laws,

institutions, and reproducible artworks) and technical inventions or kinds (e.g., the telephone). And they are characterised by the following features.

First, they are multiply realisable and thus can have several examples, copies or instances. Second, and in part as a result, they lack spatial location.[14] Third, they do not exist 'eternally' or 'necessarily', but possess temporal features: they come into existence, may change and may cease to exist. And fourth, part of the explanation of this is that their existence requires the existence of certain concrete entities. This form of ontological dependence comes in two forms. On the one hand, 'abstract artifacts' depend for their existence on the prior existence of some concrete entities responsible for their creation – notably human beings and their intentional actions or states. The latter need thereby exist only during, or just prior of, the creation of the 'abstract artifacts': that is, the created 'abstract artifacts' may survive their creators. And while some 'abstract artifacts' may depend in this way on particular creators and their particular acts of creation (e.g., works of art), others may depend only on the existence of some or another creator and act of creation (e.g., telephones). On the other hand, 'abstract artifacts' depend for their existence on the simultaneous existence of some concrete entities responsible for their persistence – notably concrete physical examples, but possibly also concrete mental examples (e.g., complete memories of them). This time, the particular identity of the concrete entities in question does not matter: 'abstract artifacts' never depend on particular examples (e.g., the first existing telephone), but instead exist as long as there is still some example. Relatedly, 'abstract artifacts' have gone out of existence once all examples have disappeared or been destroyed.

Applied to novels, Thomasson's view seems to capture well both their multiple realisability and their temporality. But it still raises some important issues and questions. First of all, it needs to be slightly modified, given that novels may exist even in the absence of any copy of them, as long as there are still means of producing such copies (e.g., due to the presence of printing plates, or computer files). But the fact that Thomasson is not explicit about this possibility seems to have some deeper implications, for it leaves certain aspects of her theory underdeveloped. One case in point is that her view leaves it open how 'abstract artifacts' are realised by their examples. It seems that the relation of realisation in question is not one of instantiation or exemplification, as in the case of properties, types or kinds. But more needs to be said to provide the view here with substance. And just as in the case of Levinson's view, there is again the question of how novels may actually cease to exist: that is, how their dependence on authors and their acts of writing has the consequence that novels go out of

14 Thomasson also claims that they are 'abstract' in the sense that they lack spatio-temporal features. However, since they are still temporal, she seems to take lack of spatiality as the main criterion for 'abstractness' here. However, mental episodes would then count as 'abstract' entities as well. In my view, it seems more plausible to (positively or negatively) define 'abstractness' in terms of features which all concrete entities either possess or lack. Accordingly, some entities may count as 'abstract' because they are non-temporal (e.g., Platonic universals), while others may count as 'abstract' because they are multiple realisable (e.g., universals in general), and even further ones because they are dependants in the sense specified (e.g., tropes).

existence once all copies and means of reproduction do. The link between the two kinds of dependence noted by Thomasson needs still to be spelled out. However, while Levinson's account seems to leave no room for a satisfactory solution (as he has implicitly acknowledged himself), Thomasson's view seems again to suffer only from being a bit underdeveloped.

## 7. The essential features of sounds

To answer the questions about the nature of the realisation relation between novels and their copies and about the persistence and potential destruction of novels, and, more generally, to get a grip on the nature of the ontological category to which novels seem to belong, it will perhaps be helpful to attend for a moment to the parallel and instructive case of sounds. My starting point will be a couple of central observations concerning the identity and persistence of sounds.[15]

The first is that, if we listen to a recording of a concert, we hear the same individual sounds as the people who attended the concert. This is just the function of auditory reproductions: to preserve as best as possible the original sounds and to provide us with access to them even long after their initial production.[16] The two events – the first production of the sounds by the orchestra and their reproduction by, say, the record player – typically do not resemble each other perfectly, but may differ in respect of the nature of the vibrating object, their specific vibrations, the specific waves which these vibrations bring about, the medium in which these waves occur, and so on. In fact, the differences may sometimes be quite stark, as in the case of a very low quality recording of a badly mixed concert. But even if hardly any resemblance is recognisable, the recording still counts as reproducing the original sounds, as long as it stands in the right kind of relation to the initial event of production.[17] This remains true even

15 I rely here on a suggestion by Mike Martin. His ideas on sounds are also picked up and briefly discussed in Nudds (2007). They have originally been motivated by the work on the ontology of works in Kaplan (1990).

16 Martin seems to think that the same does not hold true of reproductions of visible objects, such as photographs of people. In his view, when we look at a photograph of a person, we do not see the person, but only the photograph. This may be supported or explained in at least two ways: our failure to see the person may be due to the fact that the person is not the direct object of our perception; or it may be due to the fact that the photograph itself does not represent a particular person, but only a type of a person (while any particularity has to be external to the photographic content, say, imposed by the intention of the photographer, or the title of the picture). But if one prefers Walton's account of photographs as being 'transparent windows' onto what is photographed (cf. Walton (1994)), photographic reproductions put us into contact with the very same objects as the visual perceptions of the spectators present at the original scene. One important issue is here to which ontological category the appearances recorded by photographs belong to (and whether it is the same as that of sounds): that is, whether they are either merely properties of perceivable objects, or perceivable invididuals in their own right. Martin's idea is that appearances, unlike sounds, are not particulars. And the same seems true of reproductions of, say, paintings, even if they are generated, not via some printing technology, but by actually copying them with real paint. We then do not see the original painting, but only its copy (which may furthermore count as a distinct artwork in its own right). The important issue appears here to be which entities we can and do perceive directly.

17 In the case of auditory reproductions, the presence of two distinct processes seems to be required for the obtainment of the right kind of link between produced and reproduced sounds: the process of recording and the process of replaying. In the case of artworks, these processes will often be very

if what we hear (or what is involved, such as the vibrations, waves and auditory experiences) when we listen to the recording resembles much more what we hear (or what is involved) when we listen to a concert distinct from the recorded one. That is, if we listen to a recording and recognise what we hear to be more similar to what we have heard at one concert rather than at another, the recording still reproduces the individual sounds heard at the latter if it is a recording of that concert, and not of the former. So, what matters for whether the same individual sounds or distinct ones are heard is not the degree of resemblance in the physical or experiential properties concerned, but instead whether they ultimately originate in the same or in distinct events of sound production.

This captures also the second observation that, when two subjects attend different concerts or listen to the respective reproductions, they hear distinct individual sounds. And again, this remains true, even if the same piece of music is played by the same performers and in the same way; and even if, as a result, the are physical features of the vibrations or waves and the experiential or representational qualities of the auditory experiences are (more or less) the same in both cases.

Now, if these observations and considerations are indeed correct, sounds seem to be characterised by the following features. First, they are individual in the sense that they possess determinate individuation criteria.[18] More specifically, they are to be individuated by reference to their origin in particular events of sound production or reproduction, and not by reference to their qualitative features, or the qualitative features of any of the closely related entities, such as vibrations, waves, or auditory experiences. In particular, the same individual sound can possess different sound qualities or be linked to qualitatively different vibrations, waves or experiences, and distinct sounds can possess identical sound qualities or be linked to qualitatively identical vibrations, waves or experiences. Second, sounds are intimately connected to the relevant physical entities involved in the (re)production of sounds (such as the vibrating sources of sounds, the caused and spreading waves, the respective events of vibrating, causing or spreading, or the total events of sound (re)production) in that the (re)production of sounds – that is, the (re)occurrence of sounds in such a way that they can actually be heard – requires the presence of physical entities of such types.[19] If no objects vibrate and no waves are thereby caused to occur in a certain medium, there will no sounds to be heard by us. Third, sounds are multiply realisable by such physical entities: the same individual sound can (re)occur and be hearable in the context of numerically and qualitatively very different sources, vibrations, waves, and so on – notably simultaneously at different

similar: print-making and printing in the case of prints; or preparing printing plates and printing in the (old-fashioned) case of novels. It might however not always be so easy to distinguish the proper from the deviant processes.

18 See further below on the issue of whether, or in which sense, sounds also enjoy continuous existence.

19 The auditory experiences seem to be less relevant here. Even if the existence of sounds is more generally dependent on our capacity to hear them (just as colours seem to depend on our capacity to see them), sounds will be public in the sense of not being dependent on particular auditory experiences.

places (e.g., when people listen independently of each other to distinct recordings of the same concert). And fourth, sounds possess temporal features. Because of their dependence on events of sound production, they do not exist before the occurrence of these events, but come into existence only during, and in virtue of, them. Moreover, because of their reproducibility, individual sounds may survive – or at least reoccur – as long as their reproduction is still possible (e.g., if there are still recordings, or perhaps memories, of them). That is, given the means of reproduction, we can listen to one and the same sound long after its original production. But once all events of production and reproduction are over, and all recordings and similar means of reproduction destroyed, the corresponding sounds cease to exist. This leaves open the question of whether sounds continue to exist in the intervals between the various events of (re)production, or whether they literally reoccur each time they are again reproduced after such an interval. Anew, I will return to this issue below.

## 8. Sounds as prototypes

If sounds really possess these features, they should not be taken to belong to the ontological categories already mentioned. Obviously, they cannot be properties because of their individuality, or non-temporal universals because of their temporality.[20] They also cannot be identical with the relevant qualitative temporal types or kinds, that is, those temporal types or kinds which are individuated – that is, the examples of which are identified – in relation to some of the qualitative properties of the physical entities or auditory experienced at issue. For, as already noted, sounds are not to be individuated by reference to such qualities. And, finally, they cannot be identified with any (sets or sums of) concrete entities – and, in particular, not with any of the physical entities mentioned above. One main reason for this is that the relevant concrete entities are not to be individuated in relation to their special causal origin in events of sound production. For any particular vibrations, waves, and so on, occurring as part of an event of (re)producing certain sounds could have occurred in a different context – say, of the (re)production of other sounds (as suggested by the resemblance example above), or of events which are not sound (re)productions at all.[21] The

20 There are other reasons why sounds, so understood, should not be taken to be (mere groups of) properties. They cannot be identified with any (group) of the qualitative properties of the physical entities and auditory experiences concerned, given that sameness in the respective physical or experiential qualities is compatible with distinctness in sounds, and vice versa. Sounds can also not be identified with the property of being linked, in the right kind of way, to a certain event of sound production. For, after all, sounds do possess some qualitative properties (such as timbre, pitch, volume, etc.), but their historical relations do not. And sounds cannot be identified with any (temporal) complex or collection, that includes both some qualitative properties and special relation to the event of original sound production, because this would render the perceivability of sounds indirect. For the qualitative properties are only contingently exemplified by the sounds; but we can perceive only these qualities. What is crucial again is that the qualitative sameness is compatible with numerical distinctness.

21 Only the initial event of sound production itself may be said to be individuated by such a special link to itself (though not a causal one). But if sounds were identical with such events (and not even with events of reproduction), we could not access them by listening to reproductions of sounds. And it would be unclear in which sense we would still have events *producing* the sounds.

other important fact speaking against the identification of sounds with concrete entities is the multiple realisability of the former. If they were identical, say, with particular events of vibrating, or with particular waves, different people could not hear the same individual sounds by simultaneously, but independently listening to distinct recordings of the same concert.[22] And if they were identical, say, with the collections of all such current (or even also past and future) vibrations or waves, we would always hear only part of them, and they would constantly change each time one of their members comes into or goes out of existence (or be hardly ever complete if they include all the relevant past and future physical entities as well).

Instead, what the features of sounds mentioned suggest is that they are identical with temporal universals which are (partly) individuated in terms of the right kind of link to events of sound production. These individual sound universals are at least multiple realisable by the physical entities involved in the (re)production of sounds, in the sense that they can occur and be heard only via these physical entities. However, this dependence of the sounds, understood as such individual universals, on the physical entities need not amount to anything stronger – in particular not to a partial constitution of the former by the latter. For in the case of such a constitution, and due to the multiple realisability of sounds, the same problems would arise as with the identification of sounds with the concrete physical entities. As a consequence, sounds are best taken to be independent enough of their physical realisers to be able to exist without actually being realised – as long as there is at least the possibility of such a realisation. That is, sounds continue to exist during intervals with no events of corresponding sound (re)productions, as long as the possibility of the occurrence of such events still obtains. Hence, the individual universals identical with sounds are characterised by their dependence on the respective possibilities of sound reproduction. We have access to these sounds by means of having access to their realisers.[23] And which physical entities count as realisers of a sound, and of this rather than that sound, is a matter of whether they stand in the required causal link to the relevant original event of sound production.

But how close are these individual sound universals to types or kinds? It might be thought that the physical entities realising the sounds are indeed literal instances or exemplifications, and the sounds temporal and 'individualised' or 'particularised' types or kinds. However, just as noted above, there still seems to be crucial differences between how we understand types

22 Note that the term 'recording' is ambigous. Here, it is meant to refer to the concrete 'records', such as magnetic tapes or similar objects in other media. But these distinct 'records' are still related to the same 'recording' in the sense of the same process of recording.

23 How these two forms of access are related to each other, and which of them should count as auditory perception, is a matter of further discussion (cf. Nudds (2007)). There is, however, an initial problem here. On the one hand, since we take ourselves to be able to hear sounds in a direct or non-mediated way, it would be desirable to classify them, and not the physical entities, as our objects of auditory perception (cf. similar challenges to sense-data theories). But since we also take perception to be caused by their objects, the physical entities, and not the sounds realised by them, seem to be the best candidates. So it appears that any view, which understands sounds as temporal universals, has to accept some kind of revision of our common sense opinion about our access to sounds. But this problem is a much more general one and not specific to the ontology of sounds: it presumably arises with all other 'perceivable' universals.

or kinds and how these individual universals should be understood. What is again important here is that whether certain physical entities realise sounds and bring us into contact with them is entirely a matter of their causal history, and not a matter of the sharing of qualities, either with the sounds itself, or with other realisers.[24] It is true that all occurrences of a given sound share the property of causally deriving from a particular event of initial sound production. But sounds are clearly not identical with properties of this sort. And these properties also cannot define, or correspond to, sounds understood as types or kinds. For the idea of types or kinds seems to be inseparably linked to the idea of non-historical and non-spatio-temporal qualities. Concrete entities count as examples of types or kinds by sharing certain such qualities with them; and the respective types or kinds differ among themselves in the qualities to which they are so related (cf. Wollheim (1980), Wolterstorff (1980), and Rohrbaugh (2003)). The relation of instantiation or exemplification characteristic of types or universals seems therefore to be distinct from the relation of causal or historical dependence characteristic of individual universals such as sounds. However, this means to accept the existence of what I would like to call *prototypes:* temporal universals that differ from properties, kinds or types in the way in which they are individuated and relate to their concrete realisers.[25]

**9. Sounds as temporal dependants**

But sounds, if taken to be temporal and, in some sense, multiply realisable, may perhaps be understood in a different way. With respect to properties, such a different understanding of their seeming multiple realisability has recently gained weight. The idea is, of course, to treat properties as tropes, rather than as temporal or non-temporal universals (along the lines of, say, Platonist or Aristotelian views). Tropes are what I would like to call *dependants*. Such dependent entities are characterised by the fact that their existence depends on the simultaneous existence of other entities: they exist only if, and maximally as long as, these underlying entities exist. The simultaneity requirement is needed to exclude cases of (mere) causal dependence. In some sense, all caused entities depend for their existence on what has caused them. But the latter need not to remain in existence for the former to do so. In contrast, the existence of dependants – such as tropes – requires the simultaneous and ongoing existence of what they are dependent on.

24 Note, again, that, while all realisers of a given sound ultimately causally derive from the same event of initial sound production,

25 I prefer not to call them simply 'abstract individuals' because types and kinds can be 'individual' in enjoying continuing existence and possessing determinate individuation conditions as well and might therefore also count as 'abstract individuals'. And 'abstract particulars' migth wrongly suggest that they are not really universals, that is, multiply realisable. However, there is another sense in which prototypes, but not types or kinds, are 'individual': if the latter is taken to highlight the fact that what individuates the respective entities are not their qualities, but their historical properties (cf. Rohrbaugh (2003)).

In the case of tropes, the respective underlying entities – or bearers – are concrete entities. One consequence of this is that they are temporal dependants, given that their bearers show temporality. Another is that tropes differ from their bearers on which they depend. In particular, they are not (normal) concrete entities which could exist on their own.[26] And a third consequence is that tropes, understood as existentially dependent on concrete entities, differ from universals in that they are not multiply realisable. Since particular tropes depend on their particular bearers, they cannot have more than one bearer, or a different bearer than they actually have.

Now, tropes are grouped together, or distinguished from each other, in relation to whether they resemble each other.[27] For example, two 'red' objects possess tropes of the same sort and therefore count both as 'red' because of the resemblance between the two respective tropes. And, in this sense, 'redness' can be multiply realisable – or, since there is, strictly speaking, no such thing as a multiple realisable 'redness' any more, we treat the objects in question as if they would instantiate the same universal 'redness'. This approach thus involves a slightly revisionary view on what it means for multiple realisability to occur, but it may be advantageous in other respects – such as the sparseness of the ontological categories needed to be postulated.

But the multiple realisability of sounds cannot be treated in the same way, since resemblance does not matter for the individuation of sounds. Instead, their specific origin does; and the respective temporal dependants may be grouped together, or distinguished from each other, in relation to whether they ultimately stem from the same particular event of sound production. Sounds, understood as such temporal dependants, cannot depend for their existence on the simultaneous existence of the original event of sound production, given that they we can reproduce and hear them long after the end of this event. Hence, the existence of sounds should instead be taken to be dependent on the simultaneous existence of some of the physical entities significantly involved in their (re)production. And this kind of dependence can take on at least two different forms. First, the physical objects or events in question may partly constitute the sounds. Or, second, the physical entities may bear the sounds as dependent constituents (similar to tropes which partly constitute their bearers). In both cases, sounds do not exist if they are not currently (re)produced. But it is possible that sounds of the same sort – that is, stemming from the same initial event of production – may 'reoccur', as long as the possibility of reproduction obtains.

26 The situation is perhaps a bit more complicated here. On the one hand, concrete entities may be dependants themselves – though in a different way than tropes – in that they may, understood as wholes, existentially depend on certain of their parts. However, tropes do not have their bearers as parts and therefore still differ from such dependent concrete entities with respect to the dependence relation in question (independent of whether best to specify this difference). On the other hand, concrete entities – that is, the bearers of tropes – may consist in nothing more than a bundle of tropes. But again, bearers and tropes differ, this time relative to the former's inclusion of a bundling relation.

27 I aim to stay neutral here on whether tropes of the same sort resemble each other perfectly, or only sufficiently more than tropes of other sorts.

However, it becomes obvious that this treatment of sounds inherits the revisionary move noted above. For, according to the proposal, when listening to a concert and to recordings of it, we do not really listen to the same, multiply realised individual sound. Instead, we hear numerically distinct sounds – albeit sounds which have the same special kind of causal origin in a particular event of sound production. But treating sounds as temporal dependants may seem implausible for another reason. While it is true that sounds cannot be heard if they are not currently (re)produced, and that they become lost once all means of reproduction cease to exist, it is not clear that sounds go out of existence during the intervals in which they are not actually (re)produced. In some important sense, if the record is lying in one's rack, the sounds stored on it seem to be still there, even if the record is not played; they just cannot be heard at the moment. The same line of reasoning cannot be upheld with respect to tropes. If there are currently no red objects, that is, no red-tropes, there is also no 'redness'. And this difference may be explained by reference to the fact that sounds, but not tropes, are identified and individuated by reference to their origin. The idea is that the existence of sounds – in contrast to their occurrence and hearability – requires nothing more than the possibility of their reproduction. And indeed, it becomes unclear which further condition on their existence could ensure that they in fact exist only when they are actually (re)produced. Hence, it seems much more plausible to treat sounds as genuinely multiply realisable temporal universals, rather than as only seemingly multiply realisable temporal dependants.

One consequence of these considerations is that Alward's recent proposal of how to treat pieces of music seems slightly misguided.[28] According to Alward's theory, pieces of music are concrete and continuously existing entities. More specifically, they are comprehensive events which are constituted by the initial event of composition and any appropriately causally linked performances of the composed piece. But although he maintains that this view is capable of explaining why pieces of music can have multiple occurrences, this does not seem to be literally true. Of course, the comprehensive event in question may include many different concrete occurrences of the musical work. But given that this work is taken to be identical with the total event, none of these concrete performances may count in any meaningful sense as realising the whole piece of music just by itself. However, it seems that our talk of pieces of music as multiply realisable – just as our talk of novels as multiply realisable – expresses just this idea of their possibly being 'wholly present' in each of their simultaneous or non-simultaneous concrete realisations. So, again, we seem to have a revisionary and weakening reading of what it means for artworks to be multiply realisable. Besides, Alward's view faces other objections. Most importantly perhaps, it is again unclear when, or how, pieces of music may cease to exist. Taking the idea of a comprehensive event seriously seems to suggest that it fully exists only as long as all its constituents exist. But this would mean that pieces of

28 Interestingly, both he and Nudds (2007) refer back to Kaplan (1990), when developing their ontologies of pieces of music and sounds, respectively, but draw very different conclusions from it: while Alward treats pieces of music as concrete events, Nudds treats sounds as multiply realisable universals with a temporal and 'particular' or 'individual' aspect.

music hardly ever wholly exist – and surely stop to do so once the initial performance has finished.

## 10. Novels as prototypes

Now, the evolved picture of sounds may be used as an inspiration for an account of novels (and similar artworks). For the central observations made with respect to sounds apply equally to novels.[29] Distinct particular reproductions may bring us into contact with one and the same novel. If we read[30] a copy of a novel, which has been printed on the basis of a certain original manuscript, we read the same individual novel as someone who reads this manuscript. And, of course, different people may read the same novel by reading reading different copies of it. Moreover, if two subjects read copies, which stem from different and independent acts of writing and original manuscripts, they read numerically distinct novels. And finally, the various copies of novels need not resemble each other in all – or even very many – qualitative aspects: they may differ in layout, size, material, spelling, spelling mistakes, order of sections (as with the different versions of Fitzgerald's *Tender is the Night*), number and length of sections (as with the different versions of Keller's *Der grüne Heinrich*), and in many other aspects of content (as with. the many different versions of *Ulysses*). In contrast, the copies of two independently written novels may indeed resemble each other perfectly in all their linguistic and material qualities.

Consequently, it seems justified to conclude that novels share the essential features of sounds noted above. That is, novels are also essentially: (i) individuals and to be individuated by reference to their origin in particular events of writing; (ii) intimately connected to certain concrete entities (i.e., their copies) in that they are reproducible and accessible only in the shape of those entities; (iii) multiply realisable by such entities; and (iv) temporal in that they come into existence and may go out of existence, relative to whether there are currently copies, or at least the means to produce copies, of them. Hence, given that sounds are best understood as prototypes because of their possession of these features, novels should be best understood in this way, too. And this ontological view on novels can indeed capture of the essential features of novels noted towards the beginning of this essay. Their temporality and multiple realisability have already been mentioned. As a direct consequence, the account gets also their individuality and individuation and persistence conditions right: novels are

29 The main differences between sounds and novels – that copies of novels are spatio-temporal concrete entities, while occurrences of sounds are only temporal concrete entities; and that they are (re)produced and experienced in very different ways – do not seem to matter here.

30 In the light of the fact that, while copies of novels are perceivable, but the novels themselves presumably not (but instead only graspable or understandable), it would be more appropriate to restrict the notion of reading to the denotation of our complex form of access to novels; while that component of this complex form of access, which consists in the perceptually based interaction with the copies, should be labelled differently (e.g., as a special sort of perceptual experience), to emphasise the difference.

individuated in terms of the events of writing from they originate; and they enjoy continuous existence as long as it is possible to produce copies of them (which count as copies by being produced in a way which derives in the right way from the original act of artistic creation). And novels, understood as prototypes, are accessible by means of our perceptual access to their realisers, that is, their concrete copies.

The detour via sounds has had two important benefits. First, it has helped to clarify the ontological category under which novels fall if they really are as the core aspects of our ordinary understanding of them suggest. And second, it has illustrated that the introduction of this rather seldomly acknowledged or accepted ontological category is motivated by more than the need to accommodate novels and similar repeatable forms of art. For its assumption seems also required to properly capture the nature of sounds and, presumably, many other – and predominantly social or cultural – sorts of entity, such as laws, institutions, inventions, etc. (cf. Thomasson (1999) and (2004), and Rohrbaugh (2003)). Consequently, there are two good reasons to accept the existence of prototypes: that is, of entities which are temporal and multiply realisable by concrete entities, and which are not defined in terms of qualities shared by them and their realisers, but instead in terms of their origin in certain acts of creation. The first reason is that all other plausible ontological views would seem to be in tension with our ordinary understanding of novels. And the second is that there are many other sorts of entity of which the same is true. We need, it seems, to accept individual universals to satisfactorily account for novels, sounds, and the like.

But let me briefly return to the question of whether the features, which I have taken to be essential to novels and which have been causing so much troubles for the alternative conceptions (notably the one identifying novels with types or kinds), are indeed essential to novels. In particular, are novels really temporal and multiply realisable in the way described? The denial of this seems implausible, ad hoc and, to some extent, unnecessary.

It seems implausible for the reasons already mentioned: *Ulysses* did not exist before Joyce was born; many people can read *Ulysses* at the same time, but independently of each other and by means of different copies of the novel; and a binary file stored on a disc suffices for the existence of a novel, even though it does not itself count as a copy of the novel, given that it cannot be read (though it can be used to reproduce a copy, say, on a computer screen).

But the denial of the essentiality of the features of novels under discussion seems also ad hoc. For it does not really appear to address and try to resolve the central ontological problem – namely that of explaining how novels can be both multiply realisable and temporal in the specified manner – but instead seems to ignore it, or at least try to talk it away. It is indeed easy to 'resolve' the tension with more traditional ontological catgories (such as types or kinds) by rejecting the special temporality or the multiple realisability of novels, and so to

'remove' those features which are in part responsible for the occurrence of the tension in the first place. But if it is too stand up to scrutiny, it has to be very well motivated. But both the just noted implausibility of the denial of the respective features of novels and the considerations, presented at the beginning of the essay, in favour of the primacy of the core aspects of our understanding of novels over any ontological commitments indicate that the denial is unlikely to be supplemented with proper legitimation.

And, finally, this denial seems unnecessary because the proposed alternative, which assumes prototypes, promises to be satisfactory. Of course, there are many serious challenges to the assumption of universals in general – that talk about them can be reduced to talk about concrete entities; that supposed our non-perceptual (though perceptually mediated) grasp of them remains mysterious; or that their lack of causal efficaciousness disqualifies them as really existing entities. But these general problems aside[31], the main objection to the proposed view is presumably that it posits one ontology category too many. But I hope that the preceding discussions of sounds and novels have made plausible that this is not obviously so. If sounds and novels indeed possess the essential features outlined, then we should better accept that there are not only concrete entities and types or kinds (or tropes, for that matter), but also prototypes (or perhaps their corresponding 'nominalisations'). In this respect, the middle-sized material objects accepted by common-sense and the micro-physical entities posited by physics are not privileged over artworks: the existence of all of them, and especially their ontological consequences, should be taken equally serious.[32]

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31 Again, if it turns out that one should indeed be eliminativist or reductionist with respect to all sorts of universals, all that has been said in this essay would have to be translated from talk about universals to talk about concrete entities.

32 Note that this does not require the adoption of Quine's account of existence in terms of quantification.

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